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(SMITH)
LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [EAID](#) [SU](#) [AU](#)
SUBJECT: DARFUR PSC DECISION: KONARE EMPHASIZES AFRICAN
LEADERSHIP

REF: ADDIS ABABA 723

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: In a March 15 briefing for Addis-based partner ambassadors, African Union (AU) Commission Chairperson Alpha Oumar Konare emphasized the importance of African leadership in creating a democratic Sudan. Konare called for partner support in pressing for a political solution to the situation in Darfur, measures to address tensions between Chad and Sudan, and reinforcement of AMIS as the only means of bringing about sustainable peace in Sudan. While Konare's comments smacked of conditionalities to a UN transition, a senior AU official privately told Charge that the Peace and Security Council (PSC) decided on March 10 to support transition and did not lay out specific prerequisites. USG and other partners' efforts to re-energize the Abuja talks, and immediate delivery of assistance to render AMIS more effective, remain productive, as will continued close consultations with the AU and key member states on the modalities of transition. End summary.

FOCUS ON AFRICAN RESPONSIBILITY

¶2. (SBU) Konare, accompanied by Deputy Chairperson Patrick Mazimhaka, Peace and Security Commissioner Amb. Said Djinnit and Political Affairs Commissioner Julia Dolly Joiner, told partner ambassadors that a solution to Darfur is needed to ensure progress on the continent. He said that it is absolutely necessary to prepare the ground for the UN, and expressed doubt that the UN would be prepared to undertake a peace enforcement mission in Sudan.

¶3. (SBU) Konare characterized reaching a political settlement in Abuja as necessary for ensuring the development of a democratic Sudan. He called for highest level African and partner efforts to bring about a breakthrough in the political talks as soon as possible. Konare stressed the need to pressure both the GNU and the rebels. The rebels must be told there will be no other outcome but peace, he said. Konare lamented the tendency in Africa to resort to armed solutions to political grievances, but said that the AU intends to hold Africans to a higher standard. The AU will stand by the rebels in their fair pursuit of a democratic Sudan, but rejects unrealistic demands and any attempt to take over power by armed conflict. Konare called upon the partners to support the AU's firm stance and avoid sending mixed signals to the parties.

¶4. (SBU) Turning to the GNU, Konare said that some hard core elements of the Sudanese government still want to resolve

problems through war. "They are preparing for a genocide" since the obvious result of war operations in Darfur is genocide, he stated. The GNU must be called upon to play the democracy card instead, Konare said. Sudan must take responsibility for ensuring unity and plurality, he noted. The AU will demand that the GNU remove all impediments to AMIS operations, stop bombings and overflights, and end hostilities against humanitarian groups and international organizations. Konare cited the GNU's failure to disarm the janjaweed. He said that the rebel groups must declare their positions and be given sufficient security guarantees by the international community, but the GNU has to also do its part to create confidence. Konare indicated that the AU would call for a revised AMIS mandate to enable AMIS to patrol the Chad-Sudan border to follow up on agreements brokered in Tripoli.

15. (SBU) Konare said that improved relations between Chad and Sudan, and progress on the political talks, will lead to a better security situation on the ground in Darfur. He expressed deep concern that, unless the parties can be brought together through a political agreement, Darfur will spell the end of unity in Sudan and create conflicts in neighboring countries. Only African leadership can produce a sustainable solution to Darfur, Konare emphasized. While the AU will work with the UN to find conditions under which the UN will deploy to Darfur, the AU's strong wish is to succeed and to have political agreements in place before the UN deploys.

TOOLS FOR ACTION

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16. (SBU) Konare said that the international community must have the courage to apply sanctions if the parties do not cooperate. He renewed his call for a united and energized approach to the political talks. Konare said that he would call a meeting in the second half of May to judge progress on the political talks, and to assess whether a new strategy is required. He said that the AU will not wait until AMIS' six month mandate is about to expire. Konare added that he will chair a meeting in Khartoum on March 27, and that both the Deputy Chairperson and Amb. Djinnit would attend.

17. (SBU) On AMIS, Konare applauded its quick deployment, but noted the need to correct command and control deficiencies to more effectively protect civilians. AMIS must be able to properly explain its mandate and also make sure its mandate is implemented consistently, he said. Konare called upon the international community to speedily render all necessary support to strengthen AMIS and correct its weaknesses.

18. (SBU) Asked about the planned pledging conference for Darfur, Konare said that the AU cannot wait for a pledging conference and will immediately begin approaching countries regarding support requirements. Djinnit reiterated the appeal for funding predictability for AMIS, and noted that putting AMIS on the right footing will facilitate transfer to the UN.

19. (SBU) UN, U.S., and UK statements following Konare's address emphasized the process of transition. The UN noted that it bears overall responsibility for maintenance of peace and security and said it will continue to work in close partnership with the AU at this crossroads. Charge said that we all want Abuja to succeed, and will work to support AMIS in the interim, but transition is the best way to provide stability in Sudan. The British Ambassador endorsed the need to redouble efforts on the political talks and to provide resources for AMIS during the transition period.

COMMENT

¶10. (SBU) Although Konare's emphasis during the March 15 meeting suggested that agreement in Abuja might be a prerequisite for transition, his comments rather reflect his firm belief that failure to broker a political agreement will spell longer-term disaster for Sudan. Asked by Charge to provide clarity following the meeting, Peace and Security Commissioner Djinnit (protect), who has been more pragmatic than Konare on the transition issue, simply said that making a political agreement a prerequisite "was not what the PSC decided." The AU wants to focus all efforts on the political talks to create a best-case scenario for UN deployment and pressure the parties to reach a deal, but Konare's remarks do not change the PSC decision. Charge and the British Ambassador plan a joint approach to Konare to ensure transition does not slip, even as the international community focuses on Abuja settlement and bolstering AMIS (which also requires AU leadership in effecting command and control improvements with partner assistance). Post will seek guidance ahead of any such meeting.

HUDDLESTON